

I have put my thoughts in writing because I tend to lose my train of thought when speaking. I do not wish to monopolize the meeting, but I have a lot to say.

Ambulance 1 (2901) works. There is no need to change the way it operates, such as combining with fire service. The problems are with funding and backup, and that is what we should concentrate on. Creating an Ambulance Service District should be relatively simple, within the power of Fiscal Court, and in my opinion should be done as soon as possible.

I believe that the question of backup ambulance service needs to be revisited. I believe that the problem can be solved in a better way than it has for far less cost, and suggest that a subcommittee be created to look at this problem alone.

Once an ambulance district is formed, the question of tax rate will come up. The maximum permissible rate is 10 cents per \$100. I suggest that this rate be adopted because:

The district will operate on a fiscal year, but taxes are collected by calendar year. The district will need to have funds left over at the end of the fiscal year in order to operate for the first 4 months of the next year.

Fiscal Court will eventually need funds now committed to ambulance service for other purposes.

The district will eventually need funds to take over ALS and purchase replacement ambulances.

The district will be subject to KRS 132, so it will be difficult to increase tax rate.

FIRE DISTRICTS:

The Kramer Report recommended an ambulance service operated by fire departments. I think Kramer ignored the rural nature of our county, our limited tax base and the attitude of our people toward fire districts. I believe that the budget he proposed is greater than our available tax base can provide.

The citizens of the Northern Pendleton Fire District narrowly approved creation of the district. That approval was based on an existing fire department which provided ambulance service. It was very clear that they would not have approved a fire district that did not provide ambulance service.

I have been involved with fire districts for 40 years, and have made almost all the mistakes it is possible to make. I hope that I have learned from them. You only need to look at Cold Spring and Alexandria to see what fire districts are capable of, both good and bad. There are tremendous costs involved in operating a fire/EMS department. A fire district provides the means to fund it if sufficient tax base exists. If the tax base does

not exist, attitudes must be adjusted to compensate. Pole barns can serve as fire stations, used pumpers can serve almost as well as new and volunteers can provide the manpower. In our case I believe that our ambulance service should be 100% paid and our fire service 100% volunteer. I am absolutely in favor of separate fire and EMS departments. Combining paid people with volunteers can develop jealousy and animosity risking the loss of volunteers. Staffing a station with 2 people for fire and ambulance risks having the ambulance unavailable when the personnel respond as firefighters. I believe that we need to support and reward the volunteer firefighters that we have and to recruit more.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald J. Baker
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